

John Wesley

by David Smithers

John Wesley was a man of apostolic vision and gifts who lived in view of eternity, preaching with unceasing zeal and faithfulness, and leaving a legacy of sanctification and holiness.

Scripture: Mark 16:17, Acts 4:31, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 12:14, James 5:16

Topics: "Spiritual Revival", "Sanctification"

Description

David Smithers reflects on the impactful life of John Wesley, a man who left behind a legacy of spiritual awakening and revival in England. Wesley's unwavering faith, fervent prayer life, and bold preaching led to deliverance from evil spirits, physical healings, and powerful encounters with the Holy Spirit. He emphasized the urgency of repentance, the reality of judgment, and the necessity of preaching the full counsel of God, including sin and grace. Wesley's dedication to sanctification and his intimate relationship with God through prayer were foundational to his ministry and the revival he sparked.

Transcript

On March 9th, 1791, when John Wesley was carried to his grave, he left behind him a good library of books, a well-worn clergyman's gown, and a much abused reputation. But also, an England moved to the very depths and a Church thrilled through and through with an awakened spiritual life. John Wesley was a man who truly possessed both apostolic vision and gifts, but most importantly he was a man who lived in view of eternity. "Consumed by the thought of the shortness of time, the great work to be done, and the need for haste in doing it, on he marched, preaching, pleading, warning and guiding . . ."

John Wesley was a man mighty in faith and prayer. Time and again people possessed with devils were brought to him and in answer to prayer the demons were cast out. Not only were evil spirits cast out, but the sick were healed as well. As Wesley preached, the power of God often came upon his listeners, and hundreds would fall under the power of the Holy Spirit. Then, in answer, to prayer their souls and bodies were healed. A physician became offended at the cries of many who fell under the power of God. He attended Wesley's meeting and a lady he knew fell under the power. "Great drops of sweat ran down her face, and all her bones shook. But when both her soul and body were healed in a moment he acknowledged the finger of God." On another occasion when Wesley was traveling the preaching circuit, his horse suddenly became lame. With no one near to offer help, he stopped and prayed. "Immediately the horse's lameness was gone."

Wesley pleaded with men to repent and by faith make peace with God or suffer in an everlasting hell. People who had entertained false hopes of salvation had their religious masks torn away by his plain preaching. Wesley believed that those who failed to warn the sinner and backslider, themselves stood under the judgement of Christ. He was determined to declare the whole counsel of God, offering the love of God in Christ and giving warning of the dreadful consequences of rejecting the gospel. Wesley wrote, "Before I can preach love and grace, I must preach sin, law and judgement."

John Wesley, as well as the other early Methodist preachers, was both a bold advocate and a living example of sanctification. Wesley preached with unceasing zeal that complete holiness was the primary fruit of a vibrant faith in Christ. Counseling another minister, Wesley wrote, ". . .till you press believers to expect full salvation from sin, you must not look for any revival."

If John Wesley were to make an anonymous visit to the Methodists of today, it is doubtful whether many of it's churches would welcome him. They would most likely resent his fervent zeal and enthusiasm. When he was eighty-three he made a note that he was regretful that he could not write more than fifteen hours a day without hurting his eyes. Wesley faithfully preached almost up to the very day he died. Truly his vigor and zeal in old age were the reward of his faithful stewardship of time. He seemed to consider every thought, word and deed in light of eternity.

"Amid all his arduous labors, his innumerable engagements, his coming and going, Wesley lived a hidden life of intimacy with God. When worn out with overwork he often found new strength in answer to prayer." It was Wesley's strict habit to daily spend one hour in prayer in the morning, and then another hour in the evening. John Wesley shook the world by his preaching because he first shook heaven and hell with his praying. His preaching had a sense of eternal urgency because he had touched eternity on his knees.

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